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The
BATTLE OF
HASTINGS

AND OTHER POEMS

By
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THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

It was a bright October morn,
One thousand sixty-six,
When Sax'n and Norman came full-sworn
In fight their fates to fix.

Encamp'd their armies lay all night,
Against each other bent,
In part of country, Senlac hight,
And Battle, since the event.

Now, see ! on yon proud hill there stands
The Saxon, clad in mail ;
A wood behind ; and 'midst their bands
The banner flies like sail.

And on the facing hill, behold
The Norman host array'd,
With foot and horse and archers bold,
And keen and deadly blade.

The Saxon shields were seen on high,
Presenting face of wall;
And axes, broadswords, eke were nigh,
And javelins withal.

The Norman horse were brave and stout,
With shield and lance display'd;
With sword at need they brandish'd out,
When foemen onset made.

Now said the Duke, "Strain every nerve,
O Normans mine, stand fast !
The credit of your arms preserve,
And think of deeds long past—

"The noble deeds in Sicily,
Your countrymen have done,
With fame outrunning majesty
Of kings beneath the sun.

"Witness those Saxon churls before,
Sole butchers in our sight ;
Remember, oh, remember o'er,
That sad St. Brice's night !

"Our kinsmen Danes have slaughter'd been,
Without remorse or ruth,
By those same Saxons, sons of sin,
With blacken'd souls, forsooth."

Then 'gins the action bold and fierce ;
The Norman archers, true,
Tried every time to break and pierce
The English shield-wall through.

But this was all without avail ;
Still stood the Saxon host,
Nor force of Norman could prevail,
To make them leave their post.

And now a Norman minstrel hies ;
He rides his noble steed,
His sword he casts in playful guise,
And catches it with heed.

The song of Roland loud he sung :
But soon a javelin-thrust
Him brought to ground, the ranks among,
To kiss his mother—dust.

The Norman foot was soon repuls'd—
The Norman horse came on ;
But equally were they convuls'd,
And put to flight anon.

Duke William rallied soon his men,
And led them forth to fight ;
But they were baffl'd once again,
And pitch'd in marsh outright.

Then rose the cry, "Duke William's slain !"
The ranks were all confus'd ;
A panic spread ; and might or main
Was totally unus'd.

But soon was change beyond compare :
For, as the ranks broke loose,
And tumult rose high up in air,
With signal, flight to choose—

Just as the fall'd bird of yore,
Though suff'ring common lot,
Up from its ashes yet once more
Ascends, and finds its spot,

So William rose ! And loud he cried,
"I live ! and, by God's grace,
This day shall win ; or woe betide,
And follow death apace !"

A furious fighting soon took place ;
Duke William rode his steed,
And cautiously he struck with mace
The King's own brother, indeed.

But yet the contest had not end ;
The Saxons stood their ground ;
And strength or skill no aid could lend
To break their shield-wall round.

And now Duke William play'd a trick;
"Retreat, my men!" he said;
And, at the word, they all shot quick,
And turn'd downright their head.

The Saxons now began to roar,
And, quick as thought, to stir;
And eagerly they down did pour,
And dash'd without a spur,

And put to flight the Normans proud—
As when off Beachy Head,
The waves rise fast, and roar aloud,
The wavelets onward sped.

And now a wonder might be seen;
Duke William wheel'd around;
And all his men, as ye may ween,
Pass'd onward at a bound;

And cut to pieces all they met,
And hill-top gained aright,
Where Harold's central troops were set,
The bravest seen in might.

A dreadful contest now arose;
Each combatant now strove
To win his spurs, and did oppose
His front 'gainst foe above.

The hill seem'd won; but still the fight
Continued in full force
Around the Standard, where the might
Of Harold's thegns high soars.

The Norman archers now did shoot
Their arrows in mid air,
That they might light on English foot
With havoc wondrous rare.

And this was not without effect—
A shaft hit Harold's eye,
And down he fell, with troops select,
Around his flag on high.

With him died Gurth and Leofwine,
His brothers, and the best
Of all his followers and kin,
The tried and mightiest.

The day was done; but desp'rately
The Saxon troops did fight
O'er Harold's corpse, and forcedly
Were quell'd and fordome quite.

Great woe prevail'd o'er all the mass
Of Saxondom so gay;
"Our brave King Harold's slain, alas!
Woe, woe to us this day!"

For never was the Saxon clime
In such a woeful case,
Nor England sorrow'd, since the time
Of Alfred and his race.

And Englishmen had grateful sense
Of martial glory, rear'd
By Saxon kings, whose excellence
In war or peace appear'd.

And ever, when with iron rod
Succeeding despots sway'd,
They ne'er forgot their kings like God
That equal sceptre made;

For, when, from kindness set free,
A monarch held his sway,
"Give us Confessor's laws, prithee!"
They one and all would say.

NIGHT.

How glorious is the night ! How cool and still !
What fitting time for contemplation's sway !
How flows the song ! How like a gentle rill,
It moves along, unwearied, on its way !

How calm is night ! What a propitious time
For glowing raptures of the gentle muse !
What fitting season for gay youth's fond prime
To frame resolves and plans for future use !

How gentle's night ! When passed day's anxious care,
How grateful is repose ! Gift daintiest !
Nor heaps of gold nor titles wondrous fair
Can match in dignity an hour's rest.

How holy's night ! Day's practices apart,
How pleasing to the mind and sense to pray
To God, with a clean conscience and pure heart,
For blessings both in earth and Heav'n, always !

What an inspiring season is the night !
What healthful pastimes ! What delightful themes
Are then discuss'd in order and in light—
With what a sober brow, with no extremes !

How pleasant is the night ! How travellers
Beguile with their discourses, sweet and soft,
The tedium of their way, with song and verse
Attun'd to music of the harp, full oft !

How weird-like is the night ! What noble spell
Is cast by all the vast rotundities !—
The earth, the sky, the sea, the stream, the dell,
The lake, the meadows—all breathe softest peace !

TO IRALL, A VILLAGE OF CHITTOOR.

Delightful Irall, with thy pleasant meads,
Thy hillocks and thy valleys green and bright,
How oft among thy forests, gathering reeds,
And flowerets beautiful, both red and white,
Have I been, wandering wide and far and near,
With no companion except a staff
To guide my devious course ! But rabid fear,
That ever scorns the soul's accordant laugh
Through exaltation keen of spirit and of mind
At what is noble, wise, upright, and just,
Was not ; nor brooding care, to all assign'd
Their only portion in a world where trust
In heavenly providence attains no hold,
Had ever place in me ; but gentle thoughts,
Sole heirs to understanding high and bold,
And pleasing fancies, like forget-me-nots,
And grateful sense of wisdom that transcends
All earthly objects, pure, sublime, and vast,
All arts of man, his 'ginnings and his ends,
His conquests and his glories growing fast
Like cataract on cataract, and pile
On pile, and wave on wave, above, aloft,
Entire possession took of me the while
I mov'd a spectre, lone, inhaling, soft,
Thy scented air in all thy commons gay,
In all thy garden-plots, in all thy slopes,
In all thy fields of corn in rich array,
Fresh'ning and rip'ning to the peasant's hopes.

Thy sugar-cane plantations streaming wild
To northern blasts, like arrows keen and strong,
Thy tow'ring cocoa-nut palms, in splendour mild,

Like Sage, divine, to whom high thoughts belong ;
Thy tamarind, in decent verdure drest,
Spreading around and casting curious shade ;
Thy casuarina whisp'ring notes, addressed
To dim twilight and gloom, with wings display'd ;
Thy banian-trees, appropriate theme for lays
Of bards of deathless fame, that rank with Moore,
Forbidding, with indulgent shade, the rays
Of sunshine hot and bright, both safe and sure ; -

Thy mange-groves, with brilliant fruits supplied,
Looking like suns in darksome heavens cast ;
And, more than all, thy flood upon each side
Whereof are copses green and meadows vast,
And plants, and corn-fields wide, and low-brow'd rocks,
With trees commingl'd, beautiful and tall,
And bowers serene disclosed, and garden-walks,
Which are the most enchanting scenes of all ;—
All these, and more, my carking cares beguil'd,
Suffus'd my frame with cheerfulness full-fraught ;
Nor sense of pride or happiness mis-styl'd
Its deleterious influence there wrought.

To Their Royal Highnesses
THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES,
on Their First Arrival in India, in 1906.

Auspicious Prince, on whom the Goddess free,
Does glance and dote with sweet attractive grace,
How shall a touch of thy benignity
Inspire with hope and joy the happy race
Of prince and peasant met to wish thee joy,
And give thee hearty greeting to our home?
May Heaven send happiness without alloy
To thee and thine! Success attend thy dome!
May thy sweet consort's smile vain favours on
The softer sex of Ind that need her care,
All to her gentle bosom closely drawn,
As to a mother's is an infant heir!

Ah, happy pair! Long may ye bear your sway,
Dispensing happiness to all your kind;
Pursuing well your virtuous Grandame's way,
And honour'd Father's, both of lofty mind!

Lines composed on the occasion of
**THE RAJAH OF PUDUKOTA'S SECOND
VOYAGE TO EUROPE.**

Glory to the gracious prince,
India's noble progeny !
Heaven grant that so he wins
Laurels long for time to be !

Wish him all a prop'rous gale,
Bravely may he stride the blast !
Victory attend his sail,
Brilliant splendours round him cast !

May his voyage prosp'rous prove,
Still more glorious than before !
May his fame, high-wing'd above,
Proud the empyréan soar !

For he comes of noblest kin
That e'er reigned in virtue's bloom,
With a heart wherein no sin
Lightly e'er can find a room.

For he is the sweetest rose,
With a countenance benign ;
And the thorns that are life's foes,
Ne'er shall stick in heart so fine.

May the Muse her raptures pour !
May the Graces dance in glee !
May Old Ocean stint his roar,
Mermaids sing sweet melody !

Sovereign Plest,* O Lady Bright,
In whose realm all so rejoice—
Like the moon, all men's' delight—
Oh, the glory and the choice

Of a nation great in all
That is best for man to know !—
Glorious Lady, at whose call
Millions bend in homage low,

Throw thy most benign regard
On thy sweet and darling child,
That high Fortune him may guard,
Bind him with her favours mild !

“Araby the Blest”† of old,
Whereof ancient bards have sung,
Bearing scent on wings of gold,
Proudly that about thee hung,

Like the noble vine enroll'd,
Skirting with her tendrils young,
Parent stem both strong and bold,
Leafy trees and bowers among ;

Ne'er from out thy bosom cold
Such sweet fragrance forth had sprung,
As thou dost at present hold,
Him whose praises Fame hath rung !

Victoria, Queen-Empress, is meant, for it was during her reign, in 1898, that His Highness the Rajah went on his second voyage.

The reference is to the country of Arabia, here applied, by a bold stretch of figure, to the steamship in which His Highness sailed on his second voyage to Europe. The sweet scents wafted by the gales of Arabia are referred to by writers on this country, of whom one is the poet Milton, who says :—

“As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are passed
Mozambique, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeän odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest.”

—*Paradise Lost*, Book IV, v. 159—163.

Lines composed on the occasion of
HIS HIGHNESS THE RAJAH OF PUDUKOTTA'S
RETURN TO INDIA FROM HIS SECOND
VOYAGE TO EUROPE,
in the year 1898.

Hail, O noble Son of Earth,
From thy voyages abroad,
To the country of thy birth,
Thine ancestral goodly sod.

Come, oh, come, brave Tondaman,
Visit thou thy native land!
Cheer, oh, cheer, thy subjects wan,
They in need of help do stand!

They do sigh, and they do droop,
Like the love-born, gentle dove;
Like the maiden, whose love's power
Rides full fast the wave above;

Like the heavens when the moon
Deep is shrouded in the mist;
Like Sage, born of his bright noon—
Glorious vision him that list!

O thou bright example, free,
Firm of courage, strong of mind,
Make us imitators be
Of the high-soul'd of mankind—

They who broke the bars built by
Old, despotic custom, proud,
They whom Nature seated high,
Far from all the madding crowd.—

Oh, inspire a sense of true
Virtue, wisdom, and high worth,
That we, step by step, soar to
Visions of a higher birth,

And then cast about us fine
Halo, rich with glorious light,
That is equal to divine,
Far surpassing mortals' might!

Visit thou our native land,
As a barque that reaches shore,
As a sailor foots the Strand,
Hugs his spouse, his own heart's core!

Gladsome be thy days, O prince!
Never may affliction dark
Light upon thee with her gins!
Freedom's Sail bear on thy Ark!

Verses composed on the occasion of the
PUDUKOTA COLLEGE-DAY CELEBRATION,
in the year 1896.

What is this brilliant throng that meets the gaze,
Seeming, together, like one vast amaze
Of friends and strangers moving to and fro
In this wide world expos'd to grief and woe?
What impulse that, that stately horde doth urge,
Together heaving like the sea's vast surge?
It is a gathering of friendly folks,
In kindly bands close knit, as elms round oaks.
What glorious troops they form, whose serried war
Casts joy and love, which blaze like any star !

Lo! they go to maintain a holiday
With sprightly friends of theirs, as if in play.
See how they revel in love's vast embrace,
As love the only passion were in case!
Throughout this world, where sorrow reigns supreme,
And gold-acquiring is the only theme,
Should, in such sweet accord of brotherhood,
Men live, intent upon their fellows' good,
And joy for gold conspiring to obtain,
Sure Saturn's days at last on Earth would reign !

•
What thrilling raptures move the gentle gale,
Where Joy, Sole King, rules glorious o'er the vale,
And all his motley courtiers joined in glee—
With Jest and Laughter keeping company—
Strive to set up the spirit-fresh'ning dance
While served with coffee, and the plenteous cans
Of dainty mess presented to the taste,
And other things too tedious to relate !

And now the throng fies hast'ning to the plain,
Where eager youths come pouring in amain,
In friendly competition, to and fro,
To clutch the promis'd cup.* See how they go,
With youth and vigour thrilling in their veins !
How gaily springs the ball, as in their brains
Already springs the hope of winning bays
Of laurels fit to last for future days !—
The match is done—the eager Cup is caught !
Now see how by the crowd the grove is sought,
Where bands of pipers, going 'fore the crowd,
Burst into strains, with vocal raptures, proud.

And now our task is done ; the crowd dissolves,
And for next College-Day doth make resolves.

A Silver Cup was offered by a member of the College-Day Celebration Committee as a reward for the best player in a Lawn-Tennis competition.

A SONNET ON
“LAWFUL RIGHTS OVERBORNE.”

When injur'd merit weeps for sore constraint,
Divorc'd from what to it is justly due,
And Old Prescription's lawful right, by new
Usurping hand down borne, is weak and faint,
And stark corroding cares, without restraint,
Possess the mind, “Is this the justice, then,”
I ask, “which righteous Heaven awards to men?”
But this is Nature's answer, free from taint:—

‘Tax not kind Heaven with wrongs the low commit
Disdain or jealousy or deep despite
Doth work its influence, without respite,
On lawless man, for noble ends unfit;
But Heaven doth try the good, and saves at last,
While on the vile Perdition seizes fast.’

MEN OF ENGLAND.

Men of England, live for ever
In the annals of the free;
Ne'er, oh, ne'er, shall discord sunder
Liberty's aspiring tree!

Men of England, brave and noble,
With your Nelsons and your Howards,
Ne'er, oh, ne'er, shall vile or feeble
Offspring rise from you, or cowards!

Ne'er, oh, ne'er, was Britain's fair name
Placed in so great jeopardy,
As it was when German war-game
Shook earth's centre terribly.

Then it was that Britain's grandeur
Was to all made manifest,
As her heroes rose to succour
All the nations weak, oppressed.

Then it was not love of conquest,
Of dominion or renown;
But it was the best and purest
Act of virtue—Heaven's Crown!

Then it was a soul-compelling justice,
Movement in a sacred cause;
Sole deed of self-sacrificing,
Prompting pure of Nature's laws.

George, the noble, George, the righteous,
George, the free and debonair,
Pure in heart, in speech right gracious,
Like the Saint whose name you bear,

Art or spell of mine to practise,
'Tis impossible and vain
To describe thy noble office,
Love and friendship to maintain

'Mong the nations, great and lofty,
To protect the weak and frail,
So that peace and prop'rous plenty
Ev'rywhere may e'er prevail !

Men of England, worthy of an
Empire to eternity,
Ne'er, oh, ne'er, shall your patrician
Light eclips'd or dimméd be.

Men of England, accents fail me
To record your ample worth ;
Time and tide shall waft your glory
To remotest times of earth !

ON A CHILD DROWNED IN A TANK.

Sweet-smiling cherub, lovelier than the dawn,
That tripp'd on toe more lightly than the fawn,
How short thy days in this 'curst world of pains,
Where nothing permanent or long remains !

Fair laugh'd the morn, with rosy fingers light,
Bedeck'd with lovely hues, both dark and bright ;
But fairer laugh'dst thou, with sportive glee,
With lithe, fresh limbs and youthful jollity,
Regardless of the stern, relentless doom
That hurried thee on to the fatal tomb.

The day is spent—'tis past the hour of noon—
And anxious tidings reach'd the father soon.
The child is miss'd ; and wide the search and care,
But yet the child was not found anywhere.
Ye parents sad, how, all-bereft of sense,
How did ye pass that moment of suspense ?
The night is done ; and cloudy broke the morn,
And cloudier still the news, with horror, born.
The child is seen just floating on a tank,
The lifeless corpse then thrown upon the bank.
Ah, hapless parents ! how did ye receive
The doleful news that hard was to believe ?
What drops of pearl thy rosy cheeks did lave,
At sight of heir consigned to wat'ry grave !

Ye spreading trees, could ye not lift an arm,
And keep the boy beyond the reach of harm ?
Ye peaceful swains, more punctual than the morn,
Where were ye when the child from life was torn ?
O ye Night-God,* Lord of Thy valorous Knights,
Why did'st thou turn thy face with cruel slights ?

Ye angels bright, that in high Heaven do sit,
Beside God's throne, with gorgeous sunbeams lit,
With Seraph wings that sweep the face of sky,
When clean engulf'd the lad, were ye not by?
Perchance ye deem'd him worth a higher sphere,
With form as bright and lovely as your cheer?
Ye've rightly judg'd: such mien is not for earth,
Such lofty presence claims a Heavenly birth.

Come on, come on, with your resplendent robes,
Encircle him with all your brilliant globes;
Bestrew his path with smiling roses, sweet,
Let him dance briskly on with tripping feet;
Bear him aloft before the golden throne,
With choral song and sacred monotone;
And fan him there with roses wash'd with dew,
With the green myrtle and with pansy blue:
Belike he faints from his long pilgrimage—
Grant him repose that soothe will, and assuage.

Ye parents, gloomy, sad, disconsolate,
On whom dim sorrow hangs as a dead weight,
Grieve not; all gloomy thoughts are vain ye make,
For no abiding stay man's woe doth make.
Your son enjoys a happier domain,
Above the reach of sorrow, grief, or pain:
Put faith in God, in Him ye firmly trust;
Be wise, be sober, resolute, and just!

The reference here is to the local deity, Ayyanar, who is regarded by the Hindus as one who watches over men, just as in Greek Mythology, Pan is said to keep watch over flocks and herds. The lower classes of people regard him with great veneration, and he is usually represented as making nocturnal perambulations with his attendant Knights, and freeing the world from harm.

